

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed November 25, 2005. At the time of the Office Action, Claims 1-4, 6-12 and 19-24 were pending in this Application. Claims 1-4, 6-12 and 19-24 were rejected. Claims 1, 4, 6, 8 and 19 have been amended to further define various features of Applicants' invention. Claims 13-18 were previously cancelled due to an election/restriction requirement. Claim 5 was previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and favorable action in this case.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 4 and 7 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,592,387 issued to Vernon Komenda et al. ("Komenda"). Claims 1-3 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,318,455 issued to Gérard Villiers et al. ("Villiers"). Applicants respectfully traverse and submit the cited art does not teach all of the elements of the claimed embodiment of the invention.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of California*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1997). Furthermore, "the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the ... claim." *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co. Ltd.*, 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 USPQ2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art as anticipatory by the Examiner cannot anticipate the rejected Claims, because the art cited does not show all the elements of the present Claims.

Independent Claim 1 recites a connector assembly that includes elements that are disposed in specified planes. Notably, the following elements are disposed within a first plane: 1) the assembly housing, 2) a sliding block and 3) a spring. A connector element, is also recited that is disposed in a second plane (where the second plane is offset from and generally parallel to the first plane). In operation, the sliding block "linearly translates the connector between a first position and a second position."

Examiner cites to Komenda as anticipating all of the elements of Independent Claims 1 and 8. Specifically, Examiner cites to elements 720 and 726 as teaching an “assembly housing.” However, Applicants note that element 720 is a “rear plate” and element 726 is a “guide pin block.” See Col. 6, lines 19-20. Additionally, the sliding block 714 cited by Examiner (the “mounting plate” 714 of Komenda) is not “housed” within elements 720 and 726, but is offset or disposed adjacent from these elements. Accordingly, Applicants submit that Komenda fails to disclose, teach or suggest an assembly housing element as recited in Independent Claims 1 and 8.

Additionally, Komenda also fails to disclose 1) an assembly housing, 2) a sliding block and 3) a spring all disposed in a first plane with a connector disposed in a second plane, parallel to the first plane. Examiner has included a Figure showing the planes cited in Komenda, however both planes (assuming the planes intersect perpendicular to the figure shown) appear to intersect with the connector but neither plane appears to intersect the elements listed by the Examiner (mounting plate 714, guide pin block 726 and springs 722).

Examiner also cites to Villiers as anticipating all of the claim limitations of Independent Claim 1. However, Villiers is directed to a connector designed to provide six degrees of freedom to a connector body. See Col. 1, lines 28-29. Independent Claims 1 and 8 each recite a sliding block that is “operable to linearly translate the connector between a first position and a second position. Because the assembly of Villiers allows the connector to float in six degrees of freedom, it does not disclose, teach or suggest the constrained translation of the sliding block claimed by Independent Claim 1.

Because Komenda and Villiers each fail to disclose all of the recited limitations, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection under §102 and full allowance of Independent Claim 1 and Claims 1-5 and 7 which depend therefrom.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 6, 8-12 and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Komenda. Applicants respectfully traverse and submit that the cited art does not render the claimed embodiment of the invention obvious.

In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, the references cited by the Examiner must disclose all claimed limitations. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 U.S.P.Q. 580 (C.C.P.A. 1974).

With respect to Claims 6 and 8-12 Applicants submit that for analogous reasons to those discussed above, Komenda fails to disclose all of the elements of Independent Claim 8. For instance, Independent Claim 8 includes similar limitations related to the positioning of the 1) assembly housing, 2) sliding block and 3) spring elements in a single plane that are not disclosed by Komenda.

With respect to Claims 19-24, Examiner has indicated that these claims have been rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Komenda but has failed to specify how Komenda renders obvious these claims. As such, Applicants cannot provide a specific argument/response—however, for the reasons generally discussed above, Applicants submit that Komenda fails to render obvious Claims 19-24.

Applicants request reconsideration, withdrawal of the § 103(a) rejections and full allowance of Claims 6, 8-12 and 19-24.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have now made an earnest effort to place this case in condition for allowance in light of the amendments and remarks set forth above. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of remaining Claims 1-24 as amended.

Applicants believe no fees are due, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 02-0383 of Baker Botts L.L.P. in order to effectuate this filing.

If there are any matters concerning this Application that may be cleared up in a telephone conversation, please contact Applicants' attorney at 512.322.2548.

Respectfully submitted,

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